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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: CHAD/DARFUR: FRENCH AMBASSADOR SETS LIMITS ON  
FRENCH CONTRIBUTIONS TO SECURITY IN EASTERN CHAD

REF: NDJAMENA 853

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SUMMARY:  
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¶1. (SBU) France's Ambassador to Chad told UN U/S General for Peacekeeping Operations that there should be no illusions about using France's troops in Chad as an arm of an eventual PKO in Darfur. He stressed the need for international protection of the refugees and IDPs in Chad, made clear France's willingness to be cooperative, but placed a marker down that the international community could not assume that French troops would pick up the task of peacekeeping and refugee/IDP protection in eastern Chad. END SUMMARY

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A PKO FOR DARFUR -- NOT CHAD  
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¶2. (SBU) Reftel reported UN Under Secretary General for Peacekeeping Operations (U/SG DPKO) Jean-Marie Guehenno's June 16 briefing on the huge challenges that extending the mandate of a Darfur PKO into refugee and IDP protection in Chad. He likened it to an attempt to "police several cities of 20,000 to 30,000 people", referred to the impossibility of "locking up 1,000 kms of Chad/Sudan border", and rejected extending the PKO from Darfur into an additional region of roughly 250 kms by 800 kms in Chad. He urged his audience to entertain no illusions about what would be possible in Chad from a UN presence in the Darfur.

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NEW THINKING NEEDED FOR A  
DARFUR PKO  
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¶3. (SBU) France's Ambassador to Chad, Jean-Pierre Bercot explained that France fully supported the implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) as the best available basis

for peace. This included strong French backing for a UNPKO in Darfur to back up DPA implementation. Bercot acknowledged the challenges facing the UN/AU Technical Assessment Mission, noting that the logistics of "hand-over" and the dimensions of a UNPKO were yet to be defined. He posited that, if PKO structures seen in other conflict areas were replicated in Darfur, it would mean a force of something like 100,000 men. Clearly, these formulas could not be carried over to the Darfur context, and thus the idea of PKO must be re-defined for this exercise, according to Bercot.

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FRANCE IS NOT CHAD'S PKO  
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¶4. (SBU) Amb. Bercot stated that his authorities understood the U/SG's reticence about expanding the geographic mandate of the future UNPKO, but had to stress that this did not mean that there was not a problem in Chad that did not need to be addressed. Bercot made clear that this question could become a sore point for France, given the risk of expectations that France would pick up the tasks of peace keeping and protection of vulnerable populations where the UN left off -- at the Sudan border.

¶5. (SBU) He reminded Guehenno that France's military presence in Chad, dating back decades, was a matter of France's bilateral relationship with Chad. Bercot underscored that many different international organizations, aid agencies, and NGOs had benefited from French military capabilities in Chad, from France's presence at three airfields (N'Djamena, Abeche, Faya-Largeau), its military medical facilities, provision of

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air transport, and overall capabilities on the ground.

¶6. (SBU) Bercot stressed that this generosity did not now mean that French forces in Chad could simply become the Western Element in a UNPKO in Darfur. He made clear that, while France continued to be ready to offer assistance and interoperability to the UN, provided that the UN PKO Status of Forces is clearly defined, there should be no confusion between the presence of French forces in Chad, under bilateral agreement with the GOC, and the provision of security for the refugee and IDP camps in Eastern Chad.

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COMMENT  
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¶7. (SBU) We heard Ambassador Bercot to be placing a marker in front of the UN's highest ranking official for peacekeeping operations, his AU colleagues, and the other members of this UN/AU Technical Assessment Mission: The international community must take on the responsibility for ensuring that peace and security does not stop at the Chad/Sudan border.  
END COMMENT.

¶8. (U) Tripoli Minimize Considered.  
WALL